

Fr. Perozich comments —

Charity is a theological virtue as well as a moral act. Its practice has many facets.

One facet is donating money to organizations which claim to provide services and goods to the needy. The difficulty here is that a bureaucracy is required which eats up the money in administration, fundraising companies, and bureaucrat salaries rather than just for provision of services and goods to the needy. There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.

A second facet is tax money distributed by government to the needy. It requires an even greater administrative and bureaucratic cost, and is fraught with political machinations to promote agendas. Government failure to perform effectively is in the trillions of dollars.. There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.

A third facet is church structures which require fundraising, administrative costs, bureaucrat salaries, and now have political agendas as well. There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.

A fourth facet of person to person interaction seems to reflect Jesus' teachings: "sell what you have and give to the poor, and then come follow me"; "give to the poor some of your food and some of your clothing"; "go out and teach all nations". There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.

St. James' admonition, "if a brother or sister has nothing to wear and has no food for the day, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace, keep warm, and eat well," but you do not give them the necessities of the body, what good is it? So also faith of itself, if it does not have works, is dead." Here is a command to live charity personally and immediately. There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.

A person cannot be everywhere at once to give charity, but here are some things I do. There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.

I carry \$1.00 coins in my car and in a change purse to give to those who ask, and sometimes offer them to those who look like they need help but have not asked, reminding them to thank Jesus for this gift. There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.

Other than tuition assistance to Catholic schools, I do not give large donations to organizations outside of the parish and a few groups who I am sure promote the Catholic faith, because I feel money is wasted on administration, bureaucracy, and agendas. There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.

If an organization lists a needy person or parish in their mailings, I send money directly to that person or parish. There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.

Jesus said, "The poor you will always have with you." There is **NO QUICK FIX** here. Rather it is our Christian duty for life.

Opportunities for charity will always be present. **The person to person encounter illustrated below is the best**, even if it

*cannot always be done by each of us all the time. There is **NO QUICK FIX** here.*

No Quick Fix

**True charity involves
person-to-person interaction**



TOPICS
[Community](#)
[Justice](#)

By Richard DellOrfano | August 23rd 2019 4:00 PM

I handed out clothing and served food at a Boston Catholic Worker House during the 1960s. Homeless veterans in army jackets lined up for hot meals and warm clothing during the winter. Day after day, the same dour faces came, ate, and left. They slept in vacant buildings at night and woke to repeat the same dull routine. Priests would preach to beggars who for a free meal pretended to listen.

Back then it was a charade, but things are different today. It took over 50 years, but now the Catholic Worker in Boston arranges for the homeless to live and work together. Newcomers learn how to bake wholesome breads that support their upkeep. Teaching a homeless man to bake his own loaf, rather than tossing him a slice, makes a big difference. This is not the fake charity of welfare's free-handouts-forever that rob men of motivation. True charity doesn't have that stale odor; rather, it confers skills that people enjoy doing so they can prosper.

Over the last week, Fox News investigative reporter Barnini Chakraborty has chronicled the growth of homelessness in four West Coast cities: Seattle, Portland, San Francisco, and Los Angeles. Chakraborty writes, “Residents, the homeless, and advocates say they’ve lost faith in their elected officials’ ability to solve the issue. Most of the cities have thrown hundreds of millions of dollars at the problem only to watch it get worse.” Chakraborty describes a scene in Los Angeles: “It’s the stale stench of liquor and human waste that hits you first. Then it’s visual — row after row of dirty tarp tents crammed together on the sidewalk next to piles of rotting trash and broken appliances.” She describes “half-dressed, drugged-out shells of people wandering aimlessly in the middle of the street,” as well as “fights, prostitution, and rodent burrows.” This, she says, is “the fabled Skid Row in Los Angeles and it’s a disaster.”

Residents of these cities find their compassion is “constantly being challenged by a fear for their own safety and quality of life” due to harassment by the mentally ill. Law-abiding citizens are demanding a remedy for the horrors of vagrancy spiraling out of control. They are tired of lame laws that do nothing to address the root of the problem.

Social injustice is complex but our problems stand to grow much worse. Perhaps the job-skills model of the Boston Catholic Worker deserves more widespread trial. Recall, from above, how “cities have thrown hundreds of millions of dollars at the problem only to watch it get worse.”

A similar model would well serve immigrants and refugees. Qualified volunteer teachers, nurses, pastors, farmers, electricians, barbers, and cooks could give them counsel and training. These volunteers could also ensure adequate living conditions wherever their trainees are kept by authorities. Of course, qualified nonprofit organizations would provide needed clothing, medicine, food, and other equipment.

They come – the poor, the huddled masses yearning to breathe free. However, to release them into our streets – penniless, homeless, without proper sanitation, nutrition, clothing, and medical attention – is actually a disguised cruelty.

Richard M. DellOrfano spent ten years on a cross-country pilgrimage following Christ's instruction to minister without possessions. He is completing his autobiography: Path Perilous, My Search for God and the Miraculous.